

Kelly

By GRACE THOMSON

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No doubt he had another name, but when the gray haired old cashier had asked what his first name was he had explained that Kelly was enough.

"If I tell you the rest, you'll be calling me some kid name, an' I'm a man now," he announced. "I'm goin' to earn my own livin'." The cashier whimsically entered him upon the payroll as "Mr. Kelly," and so it had stood.

Kelly had graduated to the dignity of long trousers and considered himself a veteran in the service of Edge & Lutton when Kathleen came, a dainty, sensitive little woman, fresh from business school and yet very much unversed in the ways of business.

She won Kelly's heart by calling him "Mr. Kelly," and thereafter any of the boys who dared play a trick on the new typewriter invariably turned up at the office the next day with a bruised lip or a blackened eye. Few of them played more than one trick, for when he was but six Kelly could thrash any eight-year-old youngster on the block.

Kathleen, all unmindful of his championship, merely noticed that the boys were better behaved, and told her mother that life in a business office was not as hard as she had supposed it would be. "It's so very different from what we thought it would be to go through with," she explained, "and the little Kelly boy is just a dear."

Later on, when Lutton began to take notice of the pretty typewriter, Kathleen changed her mind, but she did not tell her mother of the invitations to drives and the theater. It was hard enough that Mrs. Lansing should be compelled to do without the luxuries to which she had been accustomed during her husband's life without having to know that the money that procured their bare livelihood was earned at the cost of keeping silent under covert insult.

Lutton was careful not to make his overtures too patent, and only Kelly saw the little things which made Kathleen's work so hard. She put aside his invitations with a quiet dignity that admitted of no argument, and Lutton, tiring at last of a campaign of courtesy, began to find fault.

It was he who dictated most of the correspondence, and there were letters to be copied over because of some trivial mistake. Night after night Kathleen had to remain copying letters, with only Kelly for company. And when at last she sought the street she never knew that only Kelly's presence saved her from further attention from Lutton, waiting in a café across the way. She thought it merely one of Kelly's little courtesies, never suspecting that Kelly, idling at the window, had seen Lutton crossing the street and had divined his intentions.

But while Kelly's presence saved her from trouble in one way it increased her burden in another, for Lutton, smarting under his rebuff, grew more vindictive. The firm was in a pool in X, and M. G., and the operations were conducted from the office. Somehow in spite of caution some facts leaked out prematurely, and the whole operation resulted in a crash from which the firm barely escaped with a whole credit.

The whole office was uneasy. That there was a suspicion that some of the clerks were believed to be guilty of treachery was apparent, but John Edge would not have any one discharged until his guilt was proven.

"We must be careful for awhile," he had said to Lutton, when the latter urged wholesale dismissals, "but if we let every one out we could never again command the confidence of our employees."

Lutton let the matter drop, but when it was decided to make a raid on Memphis preferred and the news reached the exchange almost before the conference was broken up, even the senior partner was forced to admit that something must be done.

Lutton very promptly discovered that Kathleen had access to all correspondence of the firm and that it must have been she who in some manner had gained the knowledge that had resulted in a gain of thousands to some one on the outside.

Even then Edge did not want to work on circumstantial evidence.

"Take it easy, George," he urged. "Watch her carefully, but do not dismiss her." And Lutton had smiled under his heavy mustache. He had an idea that he could kill two birds with a single stone.

"That red headed kid seems pretty thick with the typewriter," he said. "I shouldn't be surprised if they worked together. You remember he brought a telegram in just as that Memphis deal was put through."

"Kelly," said Edge. "Why, he's a part of the office."

"All the same, I could show you"—Edge waved a protesting hand. He could not believe in the guilt of any one in the office.

"Very well," he said wearily. "I leave the matter to you."

That afternoon Kathleen waited after closing time to finish off her book. Kelly, as usual, contrived himself her escort, but he could not resist the temptation to steal across the street to get the baseball scores.

Lutton was there when he came back. Kelly heard him before he opened the door and stood for a moment in the hall.

"So you see," Lutton was saying. "I can dismiss you, and you will leave under suspicion of having betrayed your employers. You can't get a job after that. I fancy. Now you say you'll take

in the beach this evening or I'll let you out tomorrow— you and that brick topped kid. Now, give me a kiss and say you'll go."

There was a sound of a struggle, and Kelly burst into the room.

"You quit that!" he said hotly. "I'm wise to you, all right, and you make trouble and I'll tell on you."

"Mr. Edge won't believe you," sneered Lutton.

"No," but your wife will," was the retort. Lutton made a dive for Kelly, and the boy dodged. There was a chase around the table until Lutton, realizing that he was cutting no dignified figure, stalked out. At the door he paused for an instant.

"I was just joking about dismissing you, Miss Lansing," he said. "I beg that you will pardon me. We will say nothing more about it."

The door slammed and Kelly gravely executed a double shuffle. "To a standstill," he cried joyously. "You come on home. I guess Lutton won't kick if those letters don't go out tonight. If he says anything I'll fix it."

There was a conference the following afternoon, and Kelly, as his work took him in and out of the room, seemed bursting with excitement. Several times he eyed Lutton with a glitter of triumph in his eye, and Lutton felt uncomfortable.

At last a decision was reached, and Sears, the head of the pool, looked around the table. "Then it is agreed that we run Tennessee Southeastern up to 90," he said. There was a murmur of assent. "We should make a twenty-point profit," he continued, "unless there is a leakage."

There was a crash from the window, and Lutton, who had gone over to adjust the shade, turned toward them with the cord in his hand.

"There ain't no leakage this time," announced Kelly jubilantly. "I tackled the shade down."

"What do you mean," demanded Edge. For answer Kelly led him to the window.

"See Cunningham's windows across the way?" he asked. "Mr. Lutton signals with the curtain. I got it out of one of Cunningham's clerks. Cunningham buys or sells according to how Lutton tells him, and they divide. They made twenty thousand apiece out of that Memphis deal. Then he tried to blame Miss Kathleen for it."

Half an hour later the discredited Lutton was leaving the office in which he was no longer a partner. He met Kelly coming in.

"I suppose you think Miss Lansing will marry you now?" he answered.

"No such luck," said Kelly placidly. "She's going to be hitched to a lawyer chap uptown. The best I get for mine is best man; but, say, I ain't kickin'; I ain't no hog."

A Judgment of Solomon.

The ancient and famous Holyrood Sanctuary For Debtors fell into disuse when imprisonment for debt was abolished in Scotland. The most famous of the who took advantage of it was Thomas De Quincey, author of "Confessions of an English Opium Eater." The sanctuary boundary at the foot of the Canongate was marked by a row of stones in the Abbey strand, which was known as a most humorous story connected with the institution, says the London News. A reckless debtor left the retreat and strolled up the Canongate. He was espied by a vigilant sheriff's officer, who promptly gave chase. The debtor turned and ran like a hare sanctuaryward. He tripped and fell at the Abbey strand, but with his head within the protected area. All the same, he was arrested by the minion of the law and immured in the debtors' quarters in Carlton jail.

He sued the sheriff's officer for illegal arrest, and the court of sessions judge who tried the case gave a decision in his favor. His lordship held that the head, the intelligent part of the man's anatomy, which contracted the debt, was within the sanctuary and thus secure from capture. The trunk and limbs were undoubtedly liable to arrest, but they could not be detached from the head without fatal injury to the subject, which was contrary to the spirit of the humane law of Scotland.

The Original Paul Pry.

Thomas Hill, familiarly called Tommy Hill, was, says Dr. Brewer, the original Paul Pry. It was from him also that Theodore Hook drew his character of Gilbert Gurney. Planché in his "Recollections" says of Hill: "His specialty was the accurate information he could impart on all the petty details of the domestic economy of his friends, the contents of their wardrobes, their pantries, the number of pots of preserves in their store closets and of the table napkins in their linen presses, the dates of their births and marriages, the amounts of their tradesmen's bills and whether paid weekly or quarterly. He had been on the press and was connected with the Morning Chronicle. He used to drive Matthews crazy by ferreting out his whereabouts when he left London and popping the information in some paper."

Edgett of Bryans Days.

An old manual of etiquette shows that the people of bygone days were not so different from those of the present, for the treatise thinks it necessary to state that one should never ask a friend where she bought her gown and the uttermost farthing of its cost. To this rule, however, an astonishing exception is made. One might ask these things, it seems, if one really wanted to get a gown exactly like the one in question and were therefore asking sincerely for information. Evidently in these days, when sisters thought it smart to dress exactly alike, it was considered a compliment to copy a friend's gown. Another interesting statement of this precious manual is that no lady looks worse than when "gnawing a bone."

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PUNS AND PUNSTERS

A DEFINITION OF THE FORMER AND EXAMPLES OF THE LATTER.

Some Specimens of the Better Class of What is Called the "Lowest Form of Wit"—A Brilliant Coterie of British Punsters.

Is the pun a legitimate form of wit? Some people think not, and Dr. Johnson said that a man who would make a pun would pick a pocket. But the fact is that the general objection to puns is because of their frequent lack of wit—that is to say, it is directed to bad puns. We do not want to discuss bad puns or even to hear them. The point is, whether good puns are admissible as legitimate and commendable expressions of humor. It is of no use to say, like Sydney Smith, that puns ought to be in bad repute, and, although one finds an incorrigible punster—often, it is true, an incorrigible bore—in every little circle of social life, one does not find the race of pickpockets to be increasing alarmingly in numbers.

It is probable that there are a few even in these days of culture capable of appreciating the profound witicism which De Quincey discovered in the jests for which poor Elinor Lamia was put to death by Domitian.

If we want to argue the legitimacy of puns we are obliged to fall back on the old discussion as to the difference between wit and humor. The definitions are legion, of course, but not one of them is wholly satisfactory. "Knowledge comes and wisdom lingers," Tennyson says, and perhaps we might found upon this a parody, with some approach to truth—that wit sparkles and humor permeates. But there is little profit to be got in analysis of this kind. What is funny isn't necessarily witty, but what is funny must have in it or suggested by it some of the essence of humor. Thus Charles Lamb was not so far wrong when he said that the most farfetched and startling puns are the best.

The familiar inquiry, "Is it true that the first apple was eaten by the first pair?" is farfetched, but one cannot deny the humor of it. Again, in the conundrum, "Why is blind man's buff like sympathy?" "Because it is a fellow feeling for a fellow creature," there is a direct application which is also unquestionably humorous. Then, as another example of a pun which is absurdly apparent, there was Douglas Jerrold's remark about a man to whom he had repeatedly written in vain for some money.

"I have written him," said Jerrold to an acquaintance, "but got nothing."

"Strange," said the other, "for he is a man full of kindness."

"Yes," rejoined Jerrold, "unremitting kindness."

A pun which requires explanation in brackets is indeed simply intolerable. The Oxford scholar who, meeting a porter carrying a hare through the streets, asked, "Prithce, friend, is that thy own hare or a wig?" required no commentator. Nor did Tom Hood, who, when all is said and done, remains the prince of British punsters. He puns as naturally as he laughs. A babe can see the point of his jokes and the crustiest dry as dust cannot resist them.

Theodore Hook is thought by many to be equal to Hood as a punster, but Hook was labored and slow in comparison. There is an impromptu air about Hood's puns which is incomparable and an unexpectedness even when you are looking for them that is delicious. Frederick Locker once or twice seemed to have Hood's unconscious ease, as thus:

"He cannot be complete in aught who is not humorously prone. A man without a merry thought Can hardly have a funny bone."

John Hill Burton relates a legal joke which to the legal mind has all the charm of a pun. One day a bailiff, serving a writ had been compelled by the defendant to swallow the document. In a state of great agitation and anger the officer rushed into the court, over which Lord Northby was presiding, to complain of the indignity. He was met by the expression of his lordship's hope that the writ was "not returnable in this court."

Bret Harte, by the way, was not usually regarded as a professional wit, and yet among the good things which cling to one's memory is the couplet in the "Heathen Chinee":

Concealed in his palms, which were taper, What is common in tapers—that's wax.

Somebody has written a parody in which a candidate for examination even beats the record of the Mongolian: Concealed in his palms, which were spaciuous, What is common in palms—and that's dates.

Speaking of palms recalls the famous pun of the bishop of Oxford, who when asked by a lady why he was nicknamed Soapy Sam replied, "Because, madam, I am always getting in to hot water and always coming out with clean hands."

Perhaps it may be said that some of these examples are not true puns. But a pun is not necessarily a twisting of spelling and a portentious of syllables, as the writers of burlesque and "comic" papers seem to think. It is play upon words and to be really entitled to be considered witty should play both upon the sound and the sense, if possible.—London Tit-Bits.

The Home.

The home is the cornerstone and bulwork of the state, and everything which tends to keep alive and renew its influence and associations should be cherished and encouraged.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

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